

# **Home Sweet Home**



Enjoying family life OHS CN021944

Portland homes, 1970 Courtesy Portland City A

## What is Home?

to live

What does 'home' suggest to you? To many of us, it conjures up a feeling of security, comfort and a place to call your own. Home ownership symbolites a family's social status and reflects economic security. Neighborhoods reflect cultural diversity and richness in our immigrant nation.

Not everyone has had the chance to

ne has had the chance to participate in the American dream. Some Oregonians, even those who can afford to buy their own homes, have been prevented from freely choosing where they live. Renters have also faced similar obstacles when deciding where they want

Housing discrimination, unfortunately, can be directed at any



Assembling a jigsaw puzzle in a Courtesy Portland City Archives



one of us. Housing providers may make negative assumptions about groups of people because they are unfamiliar with them. Any Oregonian could be denied housing due to his or her ethnic origin, a sudden disability or the makeup of their family.

in Hood River" Hood River County Sun March 23, 1945



# It's Your Right

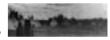
The concept of "fair housing" recognizes that people have the right to choose where they live. Good tenants or homeowners are responsible, care about where they live and are good neighbors. Where they were born, their place of worship, or the makeup of their family has nothing to do with it.

family has nothing to do with it. The unfolding of housing discrimination in Oregon parallels events and circumstances in America society. People perceived to be different have historically been subject to bias in housing in the state and in the country. Discrimination in Oregon has been more than personal prejudice. Both state and federal laws provided institutional sanction.



Oregon's Long Shadow





Umatilla Indians OHSCN008762



Settlers in Tillamook County



Freight wagons, Shaniko Flats, Orego OHS25617

## Clash of Values

While most immigrants to the Oregon Territory shared a white Protestant heritage, they held conflicting values regarding African Americans. Immigrants from Northern free soil states generally opposed slavery. Immigrants from Southern and Border slave states often had strong prejudices. Small farmers from these areas viewed African

Americans as a threat to their livelihood, fearing the same competition with slaveholding farmers they had faced back home. As a result of opposing

perspectives between settlers, a series of exclusion laws passed between 1844-1857 declared

it "unlawful for any Negro or mulatto to come in or reside" in Oregon.

or reside" in Oregon.

... if any free negro or
mulatto shall fall to quit the
country, he or she may be
arrested upon a warrant...
and if guilty ... shall
receive upon his or her bare
back not less than twenty
nor more than thirty-nine
stripes, to be inflicted by
the constable of the proper
county." One early black resident of mu Portland, Abner Hunt Francis, settled illegally in the 1850s; operating a boardingbouse and salom. More than 200 people signed a petition urging that be be allowed to remain.

Im gating to Oregon where they II be no slaves and we'll 1844 Amendment to the Organic Law all start even.





# **Shaping Racial Attitudes**

"Aliens Ineligible to Citizenship"

"Aliens Ineligible to Citizenship"

Chinese immigrants also were singled out. After the Manchu dynasty collapsed in 1853. Chinese men ventured to Oregon to work in the mining communities of Douglas, Jackson, and to work in the mining communities of Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine counties, on the railroads, and later in Astoria's fish canneries. The state's Constitution prohibited Chinese from owning land or holding a mining claim, unless they were already residents at the time the Constitution and the states. When the community of the community and the chinese immigration to the United States. No chinaman (sic), not a resident of the state at the adoption of this constitution, shall ever hold any real estate or mining claim. (repealed in 1946)



#### A "Free" State

Ultimately Oregon joined the Union as a free state, banning slavery. Even so, the first Constitution, passed in 1857, denied African Americans the opportunity to live here.

No free Negro, or mulatto, not residing in this State at the time of the adoption of the constitution, shall come, reside or be within this State, or hold any



"We Cater to White Trade Only" signs greeted African Americans laborers and servicemen during World War II and in the years that followed. OUS0324A072

#### Separate But Not Equal

Separate But Not Equ
In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court
effectively overturned the 14th
Amendment in the
landmark case. Plessy
vs. Ferguson. The
court ruled that
separate but equal
accommodations for
whites and African
Americans did not
conflict with the 14th Amendment,
which granted citizenship to all persons
born or naturalized in the United
States. This permitted Americans to
build an exclusionary, unequal society.





gard to race . . . shall territory to make and urchase, lease, sell, hold and

In 1926, Oregon voters repealed the constitutional provisions relating to it exclusion of African Americans. The language relating to race was finally removed in a ballot measure approved in November 2002, 145 years after it was first enacted.

The late 1870s forced Indians into the them from the new inhabitants. The Dawes Act of 1887 abolished the inhabitants. The Dawes Act of 1887 abolished the American Indians' communal ownership of their reservations. The act gave each eligible Indian up to 160 acres of reservation land and American citizenship in ownership of their reservations. The act gave each eligible Indian up to 160 acres of reservation land and American citizenship in

an attempt to advance their assimilation into white society. Any land left over was sold





places after dark.

# America's First Civil Rights Act

Federal, state and local efforts to counter housing discrimination began after the Civil War. The 1866 Civil Rights Act, passed by Congress, marked the birth of the legal battle to end discrimination. Oregon's exclusion laws became unconstitutional. Citizenship and civil liberties were extended to all persons, with the exception of American Indians.

All persons born in the United States . . . are declar clizens . . . and such clizens without regard to race have the right in every state and territory . . . to purchase, lease, sell, hold and convey real and personal gronery onal property.





# **Forces of Prejudice**



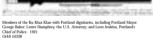
#### Oregon's Segregated Housing Patterns

A revision to the Portland Realty Board's Code of Ethics in 1919 included a section that barred members from selling houses to African Americans or Asians on the presumption that it would lower property values in desirable neighborhoods.

Oregon, by the 1920s and 1930s, had clearly segregated housing patterns. Asian Americans and African Americans seeking homes or apartments in white neighborhoods were repeatedly turned away.

Oregon's racial climate became so uninviting by the 1930s that many African Americans left the state. Eugene's few dozen black families lived Eugene's few dozen black families ave near the Ferry Street Bridge and in w Eugene. B 1936, Saler

Eugene. By 1936, Salem had almost nc African American American population. In 1945, the Social Work Journal declared Portland the most discriminator city north of the Mason-Dixon line



The Invisible Empire

The Real Estate Appraisal

and nationalities in ascending

property values:
1. English, Germans, Scotch, Irish, Scandinavians
2. North Italians
3. Babemians or Czech
4. Poles

Indians made the list

We all know what residential housing had streets poorly kee

as world peace, then we would segregation of the races.

white man's town . . . the peaceful law abiding

encroachment of the black Nigger, we don't want you here-you had better roll up yo Oreston Spectator, May 1924



Ku Klux Klan parade in Albany, Oregon. 1923 OrHi52782

## "Property Definitely Restricted to the White Race"

Real estate agents, looking to protect their investments, wrote restrictive

their investments, wrote restrictive covenants into property deeds.

The covenants property deeds.

The covenants mode in the covenants of the

"Property definitely restricted to the white race." Lake Oswego Development Co., 1952 . . . no building shall be used or occupied by

Chinese, Japanese, or Negroes, except that persons of such races may be employed as servants upon such premises." Restricted covenant, US Grant Place, Portland, 1931



stability; it is necessary that racial classes."

Federal Housing Administration

## **Asian Exclusion**

In 1923, the Oregon Alien Land Law barred anyone who was not an American citizen from owning real property. The Ku Klux Klan actively supported the passage of

the law. It viewed the non-white appearances and non-American ways of foreign-

On July 12, 1925, a mob of born immigrants as a threat to American Toledo routed 35 Januariese who culture. Pacific Survey Corp. mill. First generation

Americans felt the impact of the Alien Land Law. By 1919, a white citizens group in Hood River pledged not to sell or lease land to the Japanese Americans. Since the community had a steadel Japanese American farming population, many felt this decision had broad impact.

Although the law restricted most Japanese-Americans to renting, some who already owned land were able to deed their property to their American-born children or buy their homes through a third, white party.

# Zoning

The 'separate but equal' doctrine supported the basic principle that the separation of the races was lawful. "Zoning' was an indirect result of this ruling. Zoning regulations were designed to exclude 'undestrable' people from middle-class and higher priced neighborhoods. Real estate agents refused to handle sales that involved race mixing. By the 1930s residential segregation was fully institutionalized in Portland.

\*\*The Portland\*\* The Portland\*\* Th

institutionalized in Portiand.

With Portland's housing was increasingly segregated, other areas of the state actively fought to keep minorities from moving there at all.



Oregonians' fears of non-whites and foreigners gave rise to the growth of the Ku Klux Klan, a racist organization that cloaked bigotry in patriotic rhetoric. By the 1920s, the Klan in Oregon was the largest of its kind west of the Rocky Mountains. Its political influence extended to Oregon's state and local governments. African Americans and Jews experienced the Klan's prejudice, but Catholic Oregonians were its specific target.

century. Courtesy Oregon Jewish Museum

to Negroes, Orientals March 6, 1919



# **Segregation Continues**



## Chinese Americans

There were times when Oregon's cities and state legislature attempted to limit opportunities for the Chinese. As early opportunities for the Chinese.
as 1873, Portland targeted the

"Hood River, Golden Valley

in the hills, Who is to possess its acres

and its rills? A borde of allens from

across the sea?

for you and me?"

inhabitants of its overcrowded Chinatown by levying a fine on any person found sleeping

ntaining less than 500 cubic feet of space

Until the 1920s, most untit the 1920s, most for you and me".

Chinese Americans lived in Telelatibus lens. Hetung 2:

Chinatowns' throughout Oregon, where they spoke their own language and practiced their cultural traditions. By the late 1920s, prosperous secondand third-generation Chinese began to move to the suburbs.

the suburbs.

Chinese Americans were granted American citizenship rights in 1943. But they continued to face discrimination in Oregon, in part because they describe the confused with Japanese Americans. For the first time, Chinese Americans discovered that real time there is the second of the confused with Japanese Americans. Real estate agents did not want to sell to "Orientals." Real estate agents refused sales outright or required Chinese Americans to petition the entire neighborhood to obtain permission to move in.



# Japanese Internment

Executive Order 9066, issued in 1942 by President Roosevelt, authorized the U.S. Army to remove Japanese-Americans from their homes without any legal review. For three years Oregon's Japanese American men, women and children lived in internment camps in Idaho, California and Wyoming.

and Wyoming.

Resettlement in Oregon after the war brought mixed results for Japanese Americans. While many returned to their communities with little incident, others were less fortunate. Some found their businesses had been looted and encountered hostile neighbors and difficulty in obtaining mortgage loans.

difficulty in obtaining mortgage loans.

One conciliatory gesture towards restoring civil liberties to the Japanese came in 1949, when the Oregon Supreme Court struck down the Allen Land Law. Three years later, the federal Walter McCarren Act granted citizenship rights to the Issei, ending a Jong history of legal discrimination. But it took another 40 years for the United States to pay reparations to those who had been confined to internment camps during World War II.



# Vanport

Vanport, Oregon's second largest city during World War II,
was built on a flood plain along the Columbia River just
uotide of Portland's north edge.
Vanport provided housing in
laware. Hiber are yau pus to
put them. I work me place to
them? If the them you de the
them? If the them you de
the the best deep jound's
Americans from all over the
country.

place for them, they on Albina

Housing declared Vanport to be integrated and publicly



punnersy subsidized housing development in the United States. Integration was evident in schools, shops and friendships. Nonetheless, segregated housing existed, with better unit reserved for white workers and their families.



Vanport flood, May 1948 Courtesy Portland City Archives

When a major flood in 1948 turned Vanport into a lake, Portland city officials faced a huge housing crisis. While many of the stranded white families were able to leave town

African American families, many subsisting on welfare and unemployment, did not have the money to move and were left homeless. African Americans stationed in Despite efforts by civil rights organizations such as the Urban League War II found it difficult to buy a organizations such as the Urban League Oci4225943

to promote acceptance and understanding, many whites remained suspicious and hostile towards African Americans. Real estate agents intensified their pre-war practice of segregating African Americans in Albina district, where rents and home prices were low.

Only two bars and one



Segregation of African Americans continued after World War II. "Better" neighborhoods still enforced restrictive covenants. African Americans could not swim in public pools, eat or drink in restaurants or bars or roller skate in Portland's Oaks Park. Those traveling outside Portland were not permitted to stay overnight unless they knew people who were willing to put them up.



# **Turbulent Times**



# Migrant Workers

Oregon's population changed after World War II. In addition to the influx of African Americans, increasing numbers of Latinos came as farm workers under the

Oregons 10-10-----African Americans, increasing numous
1951 federal Bracero program.
Mexican contract workers were
steered into overcrowded and squalid
mobile labor camps rather than local
neighborhoods. Unscrupulous labor
contractors and farmers
sometimes cheated

sometimes cheated workers of their pay, and made false promises about living and working conditions. By the 1970s, Hispanics had become Oregon's largest minority group. Today, Oregon's Latino unity is much more diverse, and includes people from a variety of economic

backgrounds who engage in a wide range of jobs. Latino migrant farmworkers, nevertheless continuation farmworkers, nevertheless, continue to live in crowded and substandard housing.





Redlining: Real estate agents drew red lines around districts where they wou sell homes to African Americans, further enforcing segregation. Banks usually refused to give home mortgage in "redlined" areas.



#### **Urban Renewal**

Portland's national recognition as a livable city began in the late 1960's. In an effort to revitalize the downtown core, city

planners and business leaders launched a major urban renewal project. South Portland, once the heart of the city's Jewish life, became an urban business center displacing low-income Jews.

We had everything . . . so what average person who only wanted



Blockbusting: Real estate agents spread the word in white neighborhoods that African Americans were Biochousing Real estate agents spread the word in winte neighborhoods that Airican Americans were moving in and that their presence would sharply reduce property values. Panicking, whites sold their houses for low prices to real estate agents. Real estate agents then resold the same houses for much higher prices to African Americans. Confined to redlined areas, African Americans had no other options if they wanted to buy a home. Real estate agents readed the benefits of the fluctuating market.

#### Oregon's First Civil **Rights Legislation**

In 1953 the state Legislature passed a Public Accommodations Bill that

prohibited discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants and

amusement parks on the basis of race, religion or national origin. Mark Hatfield, then a y

state representative, worked with the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to sponsor the law, which marked the beginning of Oregon's civil rights legislation

Oregon's civil rights leaders gained another victory with passage of the state's first fair housing law in 1957 that made it illegal for any in the business of selling property to refuse to sell, lease or rent to a purchaser solely because of race, color, religion or national origin.

Despite the new law, the real estate industry employed a number of strategies to preserve segregation.

and Paul Robeson, Senator Mark that Salem hotels refused to cate

Williamette University to the

drive them to a Portland hotel

assassination of the civil rights leader, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., stunned the world. One week later, Congress, fearing the spread of urban violence, enacted the Federal Fair Housing Act. The problibre.

The Urban American Indian

During the 1960s and 1970s, many American Indians in n, left their reservations to seek better job opportunities. Rural



. mmunities were inhospitable, so the majority came to Portland. There they confronted a variety of discriminatory practices, from outright refusal to rent or sell to Indians, to less direct

discrimination against single men and large

violence, enacted the Federal
Fair Housing Act. The act
City Hall conference room. 1965
Control City of Perland Archives
Central City of Central City of Perland Archives
Central City of With the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, real estate agents and landlords could no longer discriminate openly – but discriminatory practices persisted. A housing provider might employ evasive statements or actions, or an uncooperative or indifferent attitude. Redlining of certain areas continued, reinforcing segregation and preventing many minority families from buying.

Although the 1968 act committed the government to the goals offair housing, enforcement was difficult. Often it was the word of the homebuyer or renter against the real estate agent or landlord. Lenient penalties and low damage awards removed incentives for prosecution.

# **Federal Progress**

Sign above a Po OrHi 0334A071

Between 1950 and 1970 the struggle to end discrimination gained momentum, aided by two U.S Supreme Court The Realtor shall not be party to decisions and a

any plan or agreement to national fair housing law. discriminate against a person persons on the basis of race housing law.

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Supreme Court cond, see or outsay of origin.

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Jones vs. Mayer, a 1968 Supreme Court decision, held that the refusal of a private residential contractor to sell a home to an interracial couple violated the 1866 Civil Rights Act





# **Heading in the Right Direction**



Chess in the Park, summer 2002 Courtesv Southeast Uplift Foster Target Area Project

## **Housing Amendments Act**

national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and handicap enforced.

The 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act extended legal protections to familles with children and people with disabilities (both physical and mental).

\*\*Bor Fair Bioming Art profisher for discrimination in boosing would-be discriminations by boosting.\*\* fines and punitive damages and allowing for recovery of attorney fees. In Oregon, fair housing laws began to be vigorously



Mt. Scott summer celebration, 1998 Courtesy Southeast Uplift Foster Target Area Project



#### **Families with Children**

Families With Childre
Before the 1988 Fair Housing
Amendments Act, more than 60
percent of rental units in Oregon were
off limits to families with children.
Landlords preferred to rent to single
adults instead of families because they
feared potential liability issues and
increased wear and tear on their units.
Developers built apartments without
considering the recreational and safety
needs of children.

# People with Disabilities

People with Disabilities

The Independent Living Movement of the 1970s and 1980s empowered people with disabilities to fight openly for their rights. Innovations in medicine and technology enabled people with disabilities to move from institutions or family settings to independent living, but barriers still remained. Most housing was inaccessible by wheelchair. Many landlords were reluctant to rent to disabled tenants because they feared misuse of the rental, or a lack of acceptance by other tenants.

A provision in the 1988 Gays Unite

tenams.

A provision in the 1988
Fair Housing Amendments
Act gave disabled tenants
the right to make
structural modifications to
their dwellings to make
them accessible.



# **Occupancy Standards**

Occupancy Standards.

Oregon's occupancy standards, that limit the number of people allowed to live in a dwelling, hit many ethnic groups hard. Many have large families and may live in extended family situations. Landlords, worried about deterioration of their rental units, often prefer to rent to small households. Three and four bedroom rentals are still scarce, making it difficult for large or extended families to find housing. At times landlords have refused to rent to families from certain minority groups simply because they assumed more relatives would show up later.



Deepa Kadkade working on rangoli design at the Asian Art Exhibit, Contemporary Crafts Callery August, 1997 Courtey Oregon Folklife Program of the Oregon Historical Society

# **Challenges Today**

Progress has been made in reducing overt discrimination and promoting integrated neighborhoods. Yet the goal of equal opportunity in housing remains unfulfilled. neighborhoods. Yet the goal of equal opportunity in housing remains unfulfilled. Some landlords, real estate agents and mortgage lenders continue to discriminate. It may be subtler: the blunt language of "we don't want your kind here's generally disappeared, but it has been replaced by a polite lie that an apartment of home has been taken off the market or already rented, or by having a different set of qualifications for "undestrable" applicants.

Some times a landlord has policies that indirectly discriminate:

- · No one who works in farm labor can live here (Latinos)
- No one under four feet tall can live here (families with children)
- · No one can run anywhere in the complex (children)
- We won't rent to victims of domestic violence (gender)

The housing providers may not realize the effect of their policies – or they may be trying to skirt the fair housing laws.

Home buyers and renters may not necessarily understand their fair housing rights. Many who have experienced discrimination are reluctant to come forward, believing that nothing can be done. Some, having acquired housing, are denied the right to feel safe in their homes because of hate and violence. In recent years Oregon residents have been victims of neighbor-on-neighbor harassment that has included vandalism, cross burnings and fire-bombings.

The Fair Housing Council of Oregon thanks Oregon Housing and Community Services and the Oregon Economumity Development Department for their support of this exhibit.



## **Creating a More Tolerant Society**

Today the federal government protects us from discrimin Today the federal government protects us from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status and disability. The State of Oregon protects persons based upon martial status and protects households where the income comes from public assistance programs. Some cities and countries also prohibit discrimination based on profession age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

age, exclusion inclination and general reactions.

Fair Housing laws guarantee our right to live where we choose, but legal protection has not yet been enough to ensure that the doors to equal housing opportunity are kept open. Housing discrimination could still affect any one of us, whether the reason is ethic background, religious or political beliefs, single parenthood, or a disability. discrimination – and guarantee the able to find a place to call home.



Winner, Children's Fair Housing Poster Contest Fair Housing Council of Oregon



Our challenge now is to work together to confront discrimination – and guarantee that all Oregonians are truly